



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

# News Release

August 1, 2005

## **ICE ARRESTS 582 VIOLENT GANG MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES IN TWO-WEEK NATIONWIDE ENFORCEMENT OPERATION**

*San Diego area accounts for 18 arrests in "Operation Community Shield" gang enforcement effort*

**SAN DIEGO** – Eighteen persons with ties to violent street gangs in the San Diego area are among the 582 persons arrested nationwide during the past two weeks as part of an expansion of "Operation Community Shield," an ongoing anti-gang initiative led by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcements (ICE).

The expansion of "Operation Community Shield" was announced today by Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, and Marcy Forman, Director of Investigations for ICE, at a news conference in Washington, D.C. These latest efforts bring the total number of arrests since the Operation began to more than 1,050.

From July 16 to July 28, ICE offices throughout the United States teamed up with federal, state and local law enforcement partners to target members of more than 54 violent street gangs, including Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13), Sureños, 18<sup>th</sup> Street Gang, Latin Kings, Vatos Locos, Mexican Mafia, La Raza gang, Border Brothers, Brown Pride, Norteno, Florencia 13, Tiny Rascal, Asian Boyz, Jamaican Posse, and numerous other violent street gangs.

"Street gangs in America have grown and expanded their influence to an alarming level, marked by increased violence and criminal activity," said Chertoff. "These gangs pose a severe threat to public safety and this growth must not go unchallenged. We will continue to coordinate our efforts closely with our law enforcement partners nationally and use our collective authorities to help rid our communities of this malignancy."

The 582 individuals arrested in this two-week operation are accused of various criminal violations and/or administrative immigration violations. In total, 76 of these individuals have been charged with criminal violations that range from illegally re-entering the United States after deportation; to being alien in possession of a firearm; to possession of fraudulent documents or various state crimes.

The vast majority of the gang members and associates, 506, were arrested on administrative immigration charges, ranging from being a convicted felon foreign national subject to removal; to entering the country without inspection; to violating the terms of a visa. 261 of these individuals are foreign nationals who have prior criminal convictions, rendering them subject to removal from the United States.

In the San Diego area, 11 of the 18 individuals arrested have criminal records and 10 were previously deported. One of the subjects, Jesus Carrillo, has a criminal history that includes previous convictions for causing bodily harm and sex with a minor under three years of age. The admitted gang member was arrested by ICE agents and officers with the Oceanside Police Department in Oceanside.

All of the foreign nationals arrested here during the last two weeks as part of this initiative are Mexican citizens, including three women with gang ties and a convicted criminal arrested nine times over an eight-year period for repeated attempts to illegally cross the border into the United States. The arrests also included three United States citizen gang members who were taken into custody on local arrest warrants for suspected burglary, narcotics violations and violating a restraining order against a minor.

In recognition of their outstanding local enforcement efforts, the San Diego ICE special agent-in-charge, Michael Unzueta, and Oceanside Chief of Police, Jerry Lance, were invited to Washington, D.C. to participate in today's announcement.

Since October 1, 2004, ICE has arrested 118 documented foreign gang members in the San Diego area. Of those, 46 were arrested in Oceanside where foreign nationals make up more than 15 percent of the members in multiple street gangs.

“These violent criminal aliens are endangering our communities,” said Michael Unzueta, special agent-in-charge for ICE investigations in San Diego, “ICE is committed to working jointly with our law enforcement communities to address this growing problem on a national level.”

This initiative harnessed the work of 40 ICE offices and more than 84 federal, state and local law enforcement agencies. This operation employed 384 ICE agents and officers, 247 state and local officers and 92 agents from the DEA, ATF and FBI.

The arrests during the past two weeks are the latest enforcement action under Operation Community Shield, a nationwide ICE anti-gang initiative intended to disrupt, dismantle, and assist in criminal prosecution of violent gangs by employing the full range of authorities available to ICE.

ICE uses its broad immigration authorities (both criminal and administrative) against gang members, as well as its customs authorities in targeting gang-related narcotics smuggling, money laundering, and in seeking the forfeiture of illegally derived assets.

Operation Community Shield involves strong partnerships and cooperation with existing federal, state, and local anti-gang efforts. Such partnerships are essential to the success of the initiative and to ensure officer safety during operations. ICE uses intelligence on gang organizations and leadership provided by state and local authorities. This information is then used whenever possible to arrest, prosecute, and/or deport individual gang members.

Operation Community Shield also has an important foreign component, coordinating efforts through ICE's Attaché offices abroad, particularly with those governments also experiencing gang problems. To date, ICE has participated in several anti-gang law enforcement summits and conferences throughout Central America to better coordinate anti-gang related efforts.

The initial target of Operation Community Shield was MS-13, which is one of the largest and most violent street gangs in the country. In February, ICE kicked off the initiative with agents in six major U.S. cities conducting a coordinated enforcement operation that resulted in the arrest of 103 members of MS-13. In the months that followed, ICE agents throughout the country joined ranks and continued targeting MS-13 members in their jurisdictions.

In May 2005, ICE expanded Operation Community Shield to include all criminal street gangs and prison gangs with foreign-born members. With the launch of this second phase, ICE's Operation Community Shield aims to ensure that gang members have no safe haven in our nation's communities.

**#ICE#**

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities*

EDITOR'S NOTE: An ICE representative will be available at the agency's downtown office, 185 West "F" Street, Bristol Floor, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, to discuss the initiative today. To arrange an interview, call ICE Public Affairs at (619) 557-6485.